



By Faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Heb. 11:1

They looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:10

Many are called but few are chosen. Matt. 22:14

Use this day whom ye will serve. Luke 16:13

This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Acts 1:11

Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Acts 13:48

The city had no head of the sun neither of the moon for the glory of God did lighten it. Rev. 21:23

While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. Matt. 25:5

At midnight there was a cry made Behold the bridegroom cometh. Matt. 25:6

Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Mark 1:14

He that overcometh shall inherit all things. Rev. 21:7

The Megiddo Message

Devoted to the Cause of Christ

The Cursed Ground

MATURITY IN CHRIST

DETOUR

"THE WARNING SOUND"

CULTIVATE THAT SENSE OF TRUE VALUE

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

ITEMS FROM OUR MAIL BAG

NEVER LOOK BACK

Vol. 42, No. 5

February 26, 1955

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

February 26 1955

To aid your Bible study

The Megiddo Message—is published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. It defends and ably demonstrates the infallibility, harmony, and Divine inspiration of the Bible. It enables you to give a reason for your faith, to answer the atheist, and to instruct your children correctly. By answering perplexing religious questions **THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE** will strengthen your faith in the Bible. It will give you courage for these uncertain times and bring peace and stability to your life.

Subscribers, please send in names of your friends who may be interested in reading this publication, for free sample copies. No obligation on your part or theirs.

In addition to the **MESSAGE** you should by all means read the following booklets by the late Rev. L. T. Nichols, founder of the Megiddo Mission. Each booklet is a complete subject of itself. They make the Bible understandable and interesting to study.

HISTORY OF THE MEGIDDO MISSION THE COMING OF JESUS AND ELIJAH WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?

THE KINGDOM OF GOD
THE GREAT APOSTASY
AFTER DEATH, WHAT?
HELL AND THE DEVIL
SPIRITUAL CREATION
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE SABBATH
THE TRINITY

Complete set	\$2.25
Single copies20
History40

The Known Bible and its Defense

IN TWO VOLUMES

By the late Rev. Maud Hembree

As a further study of the Scriptures these books are invaluable to the earnest student. They were designed to bring men and women back to the Bible, and to defend its pages from the attacks of the skeptics, infidels, and atheists. Many perplexing questions and seeming contradictions are answered in a direct and fearless manner. Fabrikoid binding.

Vol. 1, 384 pages	\$1.50
Vol. 2, 404 pages	1.50
Both volumes	2.50

Megiddo Hymn Book

A COLLECTION of original, arranged, and selected songs which harmonize with the plain Biblical teachings and in which all who wish may engage and sing as commanded, "with the spirit," and "with the understanding also." Price \$1.25

To help your children

MORE and more our nation is being awakened to the dread consequences from the lack of moral training in childhood. Juvenile delinquency increases like a plague! Parents especially have a tremendous responsibility in rearing their children to be good citizens. Lack of proper religious training in childhood is certain to bring dire results in adulthood.

The Megiddo Mission has a continually growing department whose specialty is the designing and printing of Bible lessons for children of all ages, from tots to adolescents. These lessons are designed in an interesting and attractive manner. Readers of the **MESSAGE** who desire further information may receive the same on request. The booklets listed below are now available, and more are to follow. Watch these columns for new announcements!

The Story of Joseph—the familiar, timeless drama of virtue under temptation, of forgiveness for injuries, of God's providence for His people, unfolds anew in its 83 interesting pages.

With full-color illustrations. Price .15

Daniel—an inspiring story of Daniel and his three companions in the city of Babylon, related in a manner which will appeal to the youthful mind. 46 pages, illustrated.

Price15

Bible Story Color Book—a something-to-do book! It contains thirty-two delightful short stories of favorite Bible characters, with illustrating pictures to color, Size 8½ x 11. Instructive, entertaining.

Price50

Pictures for Busy Little Hands to Color, Cut Out and Paste

Twenty-two pages. Wholesome childhood scenes in poster pictures to be colored, cut out and assembled. Size 9 x 12.

Price35

Synopsis of Our Faith and Work

THE Megiddo Mission is an independent organization. It is in no way affiliated with any other religious body. It was founded in the year 1880 by the late Rev. L. T. Nichols, and has been located at the present address in Rochester, N. Y., since 1904.

It is the firm belief of the Megiddo Mission that the second coming of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of His world-wide Kingdom is imminent. The Bible clearly declares that this event will be preceded by the coming of Elijah the Prophet to herald the glorious Day, to gather the saints, and raise the dead to be ready to meet the Lord when He comes.

Being convinced that these events are near at hand, the Megiddo Mission is earnestly endeavoring to prepare a people to be ready for the Lord's advent. Moral perfection besides purity of doctrine is a direct Biblical command. Among the members of the Megiddo Mission perfection of character is the goal. Invitations are always extended to whomsoever will to come and join us in this work, and partake of the "water of life freely."

Instructive booklet

A Treatise on the Holy Spirit

Have you wondered why professed Christians have never felt the genuine power of the Holy Spirit?

Have you been disappointed by pretenders who falsely claimed Apostolic power?

Have you hoped to know the true meaning of the Biblical promise?

Then you will find this booklet most interesting and instructive.

It discusses Biblical evidence concerning the Holy Spirit Power as promised by Jesus in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

The following questions are answered:

When was it given to God's people?

Why was it given?

When was it withheld?

Why was it withheld?

When shall it be restored?

Send for your copy today.

60 pages, size 6 by 9 inches. Price 20 cents.

THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE is published biweekly by the Megiddo Mission Church, 481 Thurston Rd., Rochester 19, N. Y. Subscription rates: One year, \$1.00; 6 months, 50 cents; single copies, 5 cents. In Great Britain and other sterling areas subscription fees are payable through the medium of the International Money Orders which can be secured through the local bank, or International Reply Coupons (current value, eight cents) which can be purchased at the post office. Make checks or Money Orders for all literature payable to the Megiddo Mission Church. Please notify promptly of any change of address. Entered as second-class matter, October 15, 1920, at the Post Office at Rochester, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879.

THE CURSED GROUND

Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth

FORMER discourses on the first three chapters of Genesis have shown the Garden of Eden to be the Church, the trees to be men and women, and the fruits their conduct. So we shall expect to find the cursed ground, also the thorns and thistles, to be likewise figurative and representative of all evil doers.

We read in Genesis 3: 17, 18, "Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."

When engaged in a discussion with a religious opponent we were informed that potato bugs, bean beetles, aphids, etc., which are the plague of the farmer, are all a result of the curse which God pronounced upon literal ground some 6,000 years ago. Strange, isn't it, that the potato bug, also the thistles and purslane multiply as rapidly on a righteous man's land as in the garden of the worst scoundrel!

The Almighty is not engaged in cursing literal ground, nor would a God of justice curse men and women irrespective of character, for it is plainly recorded, "The curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26: 2). In defining the symbols which the Genesis allegory employs, the Prophets, Jesus and His Apostles reveal the ground to be the hearts of men, and the thorns and thistles their evil conduct.

The parable of the sower

We find basic information relative to our subject by examining Jesus' Parable of the Sower. He teaches that a sower went forth to sow, and his seed fell into four types of ground; namely, "by the wayside," "upon a rock," "among thorns," and "on good ground." He explains the seed to be the Word of God, and the good ground the good and honest heart. "That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8: 15). The seed takes root and flourishes in the good ground and produces the fruits of the Spirit. However, there are many people upon whom the seed or Word of God has little or no effect. Of them Jesus says, "That which fell among thorns are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (verse 14). Instead of uprooting the thorns—anything which would hinder the expansion of God's Word in their minds—they continue as aforetime, so absorbed in the cares and pleasures of the present that the seed of the Kingdom finds no room in their minds: they bear naught but the fruits of the flesh.

Such is the ground to be cursed.

The book of Hebrews records information about a class of people in whose hearts the seed of the Kingdom was planted; furthermore, they were granted special privileges to promote its growth in their lives; still they persisted in yielding only briars and thorns.

We read, "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6: 4—6). Christians of the Apostolic Age who apostatized after being made partakers of the Holy Spirit, which empowered them to raise the dead, heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, etc., could not be restored again to the Church. In their apostasy, after having experienced and demonstrated supernatural power, they committed the unpardonable sin (which in the absence of Holy Spirit power cannot be committed today).

We read further in Hebrews 6, "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (verses 7, 8). In the participation of such blessings, they should have yielded the fruits of the Spirit; those who bore briars and thorns were rejected, and justly so: they were "nigh unto cursing."

Causes of the curse

Quoting from the Wise Man, we stated at the onset that "the curse causeless shall not come" (Prov. 26: 2). Every divinely pronounced curse is a penalty for willful transgression, to fall upon the head of the transgressor himself and not his posterity. In Moses' address to the Israelites before entering the land of Canaan, the terms of God's contract are clearly stated: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God" (Deut. 11: 26—28). Such are the terms today, and God will not retract from His position: anything short of obedience is disobedience which inevitably brings the curse.

The Wise Man says, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just" (Prov. 3: 33). Here the cause of the curse is *wickedness*.

Jeremiah records, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (17: 5). Here the cause of the curse is *misdirected trust*. The law states: Trust in the Lord, and place no confidence in man (Prov. 3: 5, 6; Ps. 118: 8).

Further in Jeremiah we read, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully ['negligently,' margin]" (48: 10). In this case *deceit* or *negligence* causes the curse.

Paul's letter to the Galatians enumerates the works of the flesh, as, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." Then he informs us plainly that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (5: 19—21).

Further he says, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient [becoming]: . . . for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:3-6). These evils—whether it be a foolish thought expressed, strife among brethren, variance with the Word of God, or envy of another's ability or fortune—are thorns and thistles growing in our hearts and choking out the seed of the Kingdom. Unless *we* as tillers of the soil root out these noxious weeds, our "ground" is subject to the curse of Almighty God.

Thorns that vexed Israel

In all ages God has prescribed for His people a code of ethics infinitely higher than the human standard of moral principles. To aid His people in conforming to Divine law He has decreed that they live apart from the surrounding world, that they refrain from social and political entanglements.

Such was Joshua's advice to Israel in his farewell address: "Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left; that ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them: but cleave unto the Lord your God, as ye have done unto this day. . . . Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, . . . know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you" (Joshua 23:6-13).

It had been planned to go on and complete the conquest of Canaan, but soon after the death of Joshua that divine goal was put aside while Israel made friends with the Canaanites, compromised and fraternized with them and tolerated their heathenish way of life. Every day the people violated the prime ordinance of the Ten Commandments by bowing to the strange, false gods—Baal and Ashteroth, at whose altars they sacrificed—whose help they besought, so that, when war overtook them, they went down to defeat. The Lord was true to His word through Joshua: Because of the degeneracy of Israel, He no longer drove out the nations; they remained as *thorns* to vex and distress an apostate people (Judges 2:1-3).

The faithful among thorns

David found Israel in chaos; he left it a well organized monarchy. However, not without many years of storm and stress, of war and bloodshed, of political complications and even a brief usurpation of the throne by his own son, was this state achieved. Thus it was that after forty years of encounter with so wayward and rebellious an element, he was led to exclaim, "The sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place" (II Sam. 23:6, 7).

The author in Young's *Analytical Concordance* offers

enlightenment regarding the "sons of Belial." He says, "Belial should not be regarded as a proper name. It is generally associated with the words 'man,' 'son,' 'daughter,' or 'children.' Hence 'son' or 'man' of Belial, simply means 'a worthless person.'" The English equivalent of the Hebrew word is "worthless, reckless, lawless."

By this we are informed that "the sons of Belial" are timeless characters, belonging to no certain age. Whenever "worthless, reckless, lawless" individuals bring irritation to the servants of God, the "sons of Belial" are the thorns inflicting the pain.

It was necessary that all the Prophets of Jehovah who dwelt among an oftentimes stiffnecked and rebellious people be spiritually fortified to withstand them. Jeremiah was not sent to warn Israel of the oncoming Captivity because of their apostasy without first being divinely girded to endure their piercing and stinging rebuttal. The Lord said, "I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land" (Jer. 1:17, 18), which was thickly populated with the thorny element.

In Babylon, the Jews seemed slow to develop a clear realization that their captivity was the direct result of disobedience. Ezekiel's appointment as pastor of the exiles and watchman of the house of Israel, made it his duty to convince them of this fact. By way of preparation for the task, the Lord said unto him, "Thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house" (Ezek. 2:6).

Not only did David, Jeremiah and Ezekiel encounter thorns and thistles, but we find this to be the portion of all of God's faithful ministers through the ages. In Song of Solomon 2:1, 2, we read, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." The Song of Solomon expresses the love of Christ for the Church. In the passage quoted, His Church or Bride is likened to a pure and fragrant lily among thorns. True indeed, there is no escape from the thorns in this mortal vale. As long as sin exists in the heart, in the home, or anywhere in the circle of our daily intercourse with one another, we are certain to feel the irritating prickle of thorns and thistles. It is important, it is *vital*, however, that we be the *lily* among thorns, and not the *thorns* among lilies.

Paul, greatest of the Apostles, found escape from his thorn impossible. Thrice he besought the Lord that it might be removed, but the answer was returned, "My grace is sufficient for thee." That thorn, that "messenger of Satan to buffet" (II Cor. 12:7-9), was necessary for his spiritual development, that he might the tighter gird the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, for it should be remembered that thorns cannot reach to pierce and wound the heart of the Christian who is fully clad with God's invincible armor.

Two pictures

TODAY—

When portraying national and international conditions of this age, the Prophet Micah gives briers and thorns a place of prominence in the picture. We read, "The good man is perished out of the earth: and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. That they may do evil

with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge" (7: 2-4). How forceful are the words of this prophecy, and how exactly it is fulfilled! Men have always done evil with one hand, but what a flood of wickedness just about submerges the nations as men and women daringly commit iniquity wholesale—"with both hands earnestly."

Perhaps still more expressive of the corruption, the unfairness, the cruelty of human administrations today, is Dr. Moffatt's rendering of the same passage: "The devout have vanished from the land, not an honest soul remains; everyone lurks for bloodshed, each man preys upon his fellow. They have quick fingers for foul play; the judge must handle a bribe, the high official acts as he pleases, and between them they baffle justice. The best of them are no better than briers, the straightest are like thorns twisted in a hedge."

This appalling condition—the increase of crime, the collapse of morals, the disintegration of the home, the overwhelmingly ruinous taxation for national security, the dread of nuclear warfare—has its source and rootage in the human heart where thorns of evil desire have grown unchallenged and unrestrained.

TOMORROW—

Looking into the future after the coming of Christ we see another picture unsurpassed in loveliness—no injustice nor oppression, no crime nor violence, no war nor destruction to mar the scene; in fact, there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy (Isa. 11: 9). And why? Evil doers shall be cut off—the thorns that nettle, the briers that sting, eliminated.

The choicest promises in the Book describe this glorious future age. We read in Ezekiel 28: 24-26, "And there shall be no more a pricking brier unto the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them, that despised them; and they shall know that I am the Lord God. Thus saith the Lord God: When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered, and shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the heathen, then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob. And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the Lord their God." What a blessed time when this fear-ridden, sin-dominated, destruction-threatened world is so transformed that the people of God can "dwell with confidence"—and all because the "pricking briers" and "grieving thorns" are destroyed.

We find the fate of the cursed ground to be like that of the thorns and thistles. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left" (Isa. 24: 5, 6). By divine decree the physical earth shall endure forever (Eccl. 1: 4). It is the inhabitants—those who transgress God's laws—that are the "earth" destined to be destroyed.

Besides foreseeing the cursing of the ground, Isaiah also envisioned the destruction of the thorns at the Messianic Advent. We read, "Wickedness burneth as the fire:

it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire" (9: 18, 19). According to Zechariah the Prophet, this is to be the fate of two-thirds of earth's inhabitants—the incorrigible element (13: 8).

The following chapter in Isaiah reiterates the same promise: "The light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame; and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; . . . *both soul and body* [characterizing them definitely as human beings]: . . . and the rest of the trees of his forest [trees of righteousness that survive the judgments] shall be few, that a child may write them" (10: 17-19).

On that auspicious Day when God calls to Judgment all who have agreed to serve Him, when the sheep are separated from the goats, the wheat from the tares, the trees of righteousness from the thorns and briers, when the faithful are ushered to the right with the loving invitation, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," and the unfaithful are banished to the left with the sad verdict, "Depart from me, ye cursed," then it is that the ground of Adam and Eve is irrevocably rejected. This brings to its final consummation the cursed ground of the Genesis allegory.

June 18, '59

MATURITY IN CHRIST

A WRITER, having observed the stunting in moral development among adults, comments: "One of the oddities of human nature is how small big people can be. By big we mean having reached their growth. By small we mean, having yet to grow up."

"In some instances it is to be wondered if to the end of their days they ever will grow up. You look to them for adult behavior but all you get are childish reactions. Like trees at timberline, they seem to signal: 'No growth beyond this point!' They are afflicted with *grown-uplessness*."

He advises that the only correction must come from within, or it does not come. The most anybody else can do is to show them how much they are losing in life through being by-passed in a busy world of full-grown men and women.

Perhaps there is not a surplus of full-grown men and women even in secular affairs, and certainly not in the Christian life. One may grow up in one or many characteristics; but we are commanded to grow up in *all* things, to the stature of Christ. Otherwise we shall be by-passed by those who are going on to perfection.

The spiritual life, like the physical, must have its starting point, of which we read, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." The very wording of this text indicates there is a great growth to make. From this frail and lowly beginning, divine strength is gradually but constantly added until the true follower of Christ reaches maturity.

How unseemly for one who professes Christianity and has had time to grow up, to be found doing childish things; that is, childish in the spiritual life. Every time we are not easily entreated, is it not childish? Every time we yield to just a little foolishness, we are acting childish. The Lord does not expect us to be spiritually mature when we begin but according to our time and opportunity and the many privileges we have enjoyed in Christ.

Every time we demonstrate a feeling of jealousy, of

strife, we are in our babyhood. What physical dwarfing can be worse than, or even equal to, spiritual dwarfing when one has had time and opportunity to have made an advanced growth?

When we speak harshly instead of with the quiet modesty of wisdom, we lack that much of Christian maturity. When our conversation is over-balanced by the fleeting happenings around us instead of centered on heavenly virtues and the wonders of eternity, our minds are not yet mature. "The keynote of our conversation should be a sense of all that we owe to God." Maturity, then, excludes thinking too highly of self. That belongs in the childish period of life. When by word and example we fail to help another to a higher plane of life, we are yet in childhood.

The Bible is full of illustrations of growing up. The Wise Man refers to a class who should have grown to a kingly position but were still children. And his comment on this dwarf condition is, "Childhood and youth are vanity."

Paul told the Corinthians: "Watch you! Stand firm in the faith! Be manly! Be strong!" (I Cor. 16: 13, Diaglott).

Further Paul speaks of those who should have been teachers but needed to be taught instead. They had not learned their lessons as they had opportunity. He gave a rule by which spiritual development can be measured and Christian maturity discerned when he said, "Solid food is for adults—that is, for those who through constant practice have their spiritual faculties carefully trained to distinguish good from evil" (Heb. 5: 14, Weymouth). It is by exercise that we develop either mentally or physically—likewise spiritually. As we wrestle with our problems day after day, we develop strength and, by practice, by studying the example of those who have reached Christian maturity, and by their guidance, we can train ourselves to discern the right attitude and action. One who does not progress is "obviously immature," Paul tells us, "he simply has not grown up" (Heb. 5: 14, Phillips).

Let us test our maturity. Can we meet difficult and provoking situations without being provoked by them? It has been said that children and childish adults indulge in temper tantrums when crossed. The mature maintain their composure. Maturity means keeping your self-control. Such was the command given by the Apostle Paul for our very day, for us who are living in this fast age just before the coming of the Lord: Make known your power of self-control to all men. That does not mean that we would need to go as far as a tantrum to lose control, but for even an uncontrolled thought we are responsible. To have self-control in the rush of this age means we must work rapidly and thoroughly to obey this divine command at all times.

The test of maturity is also the ability to take criticism. And who cannot say that takes a growth? Emerson said, "The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants; it is much more to his interests than theirs to find his weak points." If we remember this when that excellent oil of reproof is being applied, we will demonstrate our growth. Let us measure our own maturity when these tests come to us—others are measuring it—and do not stop at that, but let no day pass without gaining new ground in self-control, in self-examination and in self-sacrifice.

Or, to paraphrase the Apostle Paul, Now that you are a man, put childish things farther and farther away! Perhaps one of the greatest indications of Christian maturity is expressed in his appeal to the Ephesian brethren. He

urged them to grow into that union with Christ the Head which would identify them as members of His body. What is a greater sign of maturity than to be in union on all principles with the body of Christ?

When Jesus spoke to Peter that morning by the shore, He gave a rule by which we can judge our age in truth, whether young or mature. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not" (John 21: 18). When young, we do as we like; but with advancement in the spiritual life we dispense with our own head and humbly ask the guidance of those over us in the Lord who have reached maturity, even though it carries us in the opposite direction of our natural desires. That is spiritual maturity.

Are we able to work with others without trying to dominate their thinking and regulate their ways? and, further, live with others on the same principle of give-and-take? What is more childish than to strive at length to have our way about immaterial temporal matters? Though we have done just this in the past, it is truly a sign of immaturity, even as Jesus told Peter.

We might think high, but not until thought is merged with the determination and ability to control our emotions and disposition have we attained Christian maturity. In our daily associations with each other and as we meet difficulties, let us show to all about us that we are growing up.

Oh, there are so many signs of maturity which the adult Christian unconsciously manifests day after day, whether turbulent or tranquil his environment! He has acquired the spiritual glow and is able to maintain it despite all odds. His "excellent spirit" is light in the darkest night.

Can those around us see that we are growing? It must be apparent if ever we reach maturity. No one in the natural has difficulty in seeing the difference as one grows from childhood to maturity. He not only grows in stature but gradually takes on mature habits. Oftentimes as one reaches maturity there is a great degree of similarity in family traits. So we must bear the traits of Christ, the Head of our family. Then at His return, if we have attained "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," He will recognize us as "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," to share with Him all the rights and privileges of immortal Sons of God.

A PRAYER FOR COURAGE

God, make me brave for life;

O, braver than this!

Let me straighten after pain,

As a tree straightens after the rain,
Shining and lovely again.

God, make me brave for life,

Much braver than this!

As the blown grass lifts, let me rise
From sorrow with quiet eyes,

Knowing Thy way is wise.

God, make me brave—Life brings

Such blinding things.

Help me to keep my sight,

Help me to see aright

That out of the dark—comes light. —Sel.

Thurs. eve.
Feb. 19, '59
February 26, 1955

DETOUR

"DETOUR!" How that sign can take the pleasure out of a cross country motor tour or a single afternoon's ride! There you are sailing along in your fine car over the smooth concrete when suddenly someone in the back seat exclaims, "Oh, oh, don't look now, but that sign ahead has bad news written all over it!"

"Detour!" Everybody groans and you shift into second gear and the jouncy buggy ride begins over the back country lanes.

And now I want you to listen to a report from the Maltzen family as they returned home after a tour of the great U. S. A.

We were driving hummily up through the Blue Grass country of Kentucky, where the pasture land is flecked with grazing thoroughbred racing horses and their dancing colts. On our way home after nine thousand miles of cross country driving we rehearsed our good fortune in having met so few detours. But we spoke too soon. Suddenly all the cars passing us in the opposite direction seemed to be covered with mud.

Over the next rise and around two turns, there hung a sign as big as a barn door. "Detour." And there was no dodging it. "Detour, fifty-six miles." I cannot tell you what that sign did to my blood pressure. I was furious.

We had to take that detour. In we plunged with our nice shiny car, right into the middle of a sea of mud. A cloudburst had fallen the night before. We slithered and slipped from hub cap to fender. We bounced from the floor to the roof. We waited for a load of hay to pass and then got stalled behind a mired bus. But just as things were at their worst we came out at a country cross road where the sign said, "Detour, by way of Hodgenville."

"Hodgenville"—that sounds familiar. Hodgenville, Kentucky. A log cabin; Abraham Lincoln's birthplace! Detour by way of Hodgenville. Why, that's not such bad news. In fact we would quite enjoy taking in the historic sights. My blood pressure calmed down; I regained my composure. The provoking situation of a moment ago now became cause for gratitude. How glad we were that we had been forced to take a detour, by way of Hodgenville.

It is even now just a small Kentucky village. Soon we were driving into the park marked "Lincoln's Birthplace." There we saw the most famous log cabin in the world.

Detour, by way of Hodgenville. In spite of the mud, that detour is one of the best roads I have ever taken.*

So much for the Maltzen family. And now, what of us?

The surest thing we know about this, our journey through life, is that sooner or later each of us will come up to that sign with big black letters that cannot be denied, "DETOUR," for, like the world, we too have been traveling down the broad, easy highway. This detour is God's invitation to by-pass the speedway with its ultimate disasters and take the uneven sideroad of self-restraint. What will happen at this critical intersection, is the question. Will we be enraged at our ill fortune, or will we make something out of it and go by way of Hodgenville?

For us whose destination is the Kingdom of God, the long, uninterrupted stretches of smooth sailing are not good. The only means of character enlargement are the frequent jolts and soul-convulsing experiences which the detour route inevitably provides.

The Book records a vast company of veteran travelers who knew all about these detours—144,000 sainted souls so mellowed and submissive, so pliable and yielding, as to follow the Lamb "whithersoever" He goeth. That word, "whithersoever" seems to cover all of life's detours, all of the sharpest turns and twists destined by Divine will.

Take Abraham, for example. The command of God, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," forecasted a divergence from his charted course. Nevertheless, heaven seemed to crown his life with the richest of blessings. The son of promise grew to manhood by his side. Now, at last, he could see how he was to be the father of a great nation through Isaac, and took joy in the thought and the promises of God. In Isaac, now grown, the light of the home and solace of his old age, Abraham could see the fruition of his hope. The lights were all green far adown the smooth highway, when suddenly loomed up DETOUR.

The narrowed perfection road which he must travel meant a sharp cleavage between him and the fond son. Not without severe pain and a bleeding heart did Abraham leave the highroad to journey the rugged way to Moriah. But he found his Hodgenville on the summit. The difficult ordeal ended, God confirmed the promises of eternal inheritance for him and his seed.

In just a few hours a detour changed Joseph's status from the tenderly cherished son to a despised and helpless slave! But even in Egypt there was a Hodgenville. Joseph's detour brought salvation to a nation.

With all the energy of young blood, Elisha was plowing his furrow straight, when abruptly the Prophet's mantle became his detour sign; at once he changed his course, and at Hodgenville he received a double portion of his father's spirit.

Jephthah's daughter was traveling merrily on her young way, till her father's return from the battle. His vow to the Almighty meant a life detour for her, and without reluctance she chose the narrower, restricted road. And at Hodgenville she found the supreme joy of a life wholly devoted to God.

One of the sharpest detours of history was made on the Damascus road by Saul of Tarsus. So completely did he alter his course that he could testify: That which I did, do I not; but what I hated, that do I.

John the beloved of the Lord found that his detour led into exile; but on the lone and solitary route he came to his Hodgenville—Patmos—with its ample foretaste of glory divine. So you see, the Lord provides special sweetness in exchange for the bitterest cup.

One of the high tests of our personal living is not how fast we can travel on the straight way but how we take the forced detours. To many of us there may never be apportioned a detour route so long and rugged as the worthies of old traveled, but what are we doing on the little, short detours which confront us in everyday life? How are we affected by a single hour's delay on a busy day? If we know ourselves, then we are acquainted with the sort of humans who want what they want, and when they want it. When we find ourselves compelled to take a circuitous route to our destination, costing heavily in time and patience, what does *that* detour do to our spirit? Make it, or break it? Are we good for "whithersoever" the Lamb leads? Though we may come out of the detour with vehicle muddy and with head bloody, yet if we are richer and purer in the deep places of the heart, we shall

(Continued on page 7)

*Copyrighted and used by permission of the author.

"THE WARNING SOUND"

A STRANGE and awful silence lay like a mantle over the city of St. Pierre, now buried in volcanic ash. Yesterday, its many inhabitants were busily engaged in all the activities of life. They were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. Today, all is hushed and still. However, it was not that the people had not been warned. For days and weeks prior to the catastrophe there had been rumbling noises from the old mountain which stood like a familiar friend at the north border of their city. Smoke plumes had been rising from the mouth of the anciently inactive volcano, but the people only laughed, and said that the old fellow was just muttering in his sleep. A committee of scientists came and made an examination, and issued a report that there was no cause for the least alarm. On the very afternoon before the disaster, the governor drove out from the capital, to prove his complete faith in the experts, and to allay any fears of the residents. "All is safe, all is well," he said; but the next morning at 8 A. M. there were two loud explosions, and only the sailors in the harbor lived to tell the story. From the decks of their ship they saw a large plume of white smoke belch from the mouth of the crater. In less than one minute the city of 45,000 inhabitants was destroyed.

"All is safe, all is well!" What a wealth of significance lies in these words to warn God's people of the coming time of trouble on this earth. The Prophet Jeremiah knew how easily the world can be lulled to sleep by a false sense of security, when he said, "This is the warning of the Lord of Hosts: 'Never listen to what the prophets [false] say; they fill you with idle hopes, they tell you fancies of their own, not anything the Eternal says; "All will be well," they repeat, to people who scorn what the Eternal says; "No harm will come to you," they tell the folk who follow their own stubborn minds'" (Jer. 23: 16, 17, Moffatt).

Time would fail to tell of the repeated warnings given to the people of God whenever a destruction was sent because of the iniquity in the land. The same infinite goodness of God is being extended to us today in warning us. Are we showing a reverence by taking heed? Not only are we warned of the coming time of trouble such as never was since there was a beginning of nations, but we are also warned of what we must do to merit God's protection when it comes. "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel" (Amos 4: 12). *Turn unto me with all your heart, . . . seek righteousness, seek meekness, that ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. . . . The great day of the Lord is near and hasteth greatly. . . . Therefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it.* It is as though God were saying to us, "If you will not take it in through one illustration, I will attempt to arouse you in another way, and yet I call again and again, Oh, come, my people, and make haste to escape from the doomed city!

"Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The anger [judgments] of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly" (Jer. 23: 19, 20). How plain are the rumblings of the mighty chariot wheels of

Jehovah to those who give a listening ear! How unmistakably are the sea (of nations) and waves roaring! How surely are men's hearts failing them for fear of what is coming!

Oh, the unfathomable goodness of God! His plan is to make this earth a paradise of delight after the incorrigible element is wiped out, and He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should form characters worthy of perpetuation.

Through the long ages, God sent the warning sound through the Prophets, Apostles and Jesus, saying, "In these latter days is coming a terrible catastrophe." The shaking is already becoming perceptible—people feel it, but know neither what it is, nor its outcome. This shaking will gradually increase and its undulations become more and more perceptible, until, suddenly and in an unexpected manner, all will be landed in wild, frantic, raging consternation, resulting in the greatest confusion. This terrific storm, so plainly mapped out in the infallible Word of God, shall soon burst forth in all its human frenzy. All the powers of earth combined cannot stay its fury, or onward, deadly progress. It will so astound this sordid, sin-steeped world, that all faces will turn pale and gather blackness, from the peasant to the throne. The Niagara, with all its torrents' deafening roar, is nothing compared to what the then war of nations set in battle array will be. Not only in one place, but it will become worldwide, carrying terror and certain devastation in its wake.

For one hundred and twenty years Noah, that just man of God, warned the people of the Flood, while he faithfully worked away on the ark. The response he received was just as today, "We have heard that song for years and nothing has happened yet. Why get excited? if it comes we can't stop it. Let us eat, drink and be merry, for it is vain to eat the bread of sorrows." Thus they reason among themselves. But what of us?

We are told in I Thess. 5: 5, "The day cannot take you completely by surprise. You are all sons of light, sons of the day, and none of us belong to darkness or the night. Let us then never fall into the sleep that stupefies the rest of the world: let us keep awake, with our wits about us."

If the residents of St. Pierre had really believed that certain destruction would come at a definite time, they would have taken such sudden, decisive action to escape that nothing could have stopped them. But they let the so-called experts dupe them. God says it is not for us to know the day nor the hour, but He has made clear the times and seasons; and He warns us never to be influenced by anyone or anything but His Word, which tells us plainly to watch. God is inviting us now to look beyond the shadows, to the calm after the storm when peace shall overspread the scene as waters cover the sea. He would have us share in that blissful time; but we cannot, we must not, make light of His warning voice now.

There will be some who will be anchored safely in the harbor of His love when that fateful hour arrives. Only with their eyes shall they behold and see the reward of the wicked. They will be the worthy recipients of God's promise in Psalm 91: 9, 10, "Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

June 18 '59

CULTIVATE THAT SENSE OF TRUE VALUE

WE WITNESS from day to day the sad spectacle of millions being spent for things of no value, and in many instances the money is worse than wasted, bringing the words of Isaiah forcibly to mind: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"

Life is like a great store window in which pranksters have switched the price tags so that things of great value are priced as worthless, while cheap trash is priced so exorbitantly high.

The Bible informs us that Babylon is costly, and that the merchants of earth are going to wail sore at her downfall. Her pride, luxury, extravagance, vanity and depravity keep the majority of people's pockets drained, while filling the coffers of a few.

It is a tragedy that so many go through life believing the switched price tags.

It is easy to become blind to the true values of life. No one likes to be cheated. But tragic as it may seem, it has been true in our own lives, we have so often bought the dainties from Babylon's shelves and failed to partake of the life-giving fare on the Lord's table. Too often we have clothed ourselves with other apparel than the robe of righteousness. God's wisdom has not always held first place in our heart or esteem, and we have worshiped other gods beside Him.

We are so apt to exchange that which is valuable in our life for that which obviously is not worth having. We are commanded to come out from the world. As we look out on the world we see business men who exchange their sense of honesty for the sake of business; politicians who exchange their reputation for the sake of office; nations who seek to enslave the minds of men for the sake of power; individuals who exchange their soul for the sake of passing pleasures.

Why not purchase those things which are enduring, those values which God has guaranteed for eternity, those things that give us the deepest possible satisfaction even in this life?

Let us cease to trade the things of eternal value for those things that are but a mess of pottage now, and will prove but a heartache at the last.

DETOUR

(Continued from page 5)

have no regrets for the high cost in temporal inconvenience.

To us, traveling life's highway is no new adventure. Time and time again, right in the midst of apparent smooth, straight going, the detestable DETOUR sign has suddenly projected itself before us, often exhausting the calmness of the soul and reducing our Christian composure to shameful exasperation. Yet the rough and winding country lane has always held its compensations. Our Hodgenville is always there.

So why not try taking our detours with a song instead of a sigh; as a lamb instead of a mule? Trust God who knows the way that you take and the hazards of smooth sailing, to lead on through the detour route. Watch for the sign to Hodgenville where you shall reap richer rewards than life's main thoroughfare where the masses travel could ever afford.

A LIVING EPISTLE

Make me humble, O my Saviour,
That I may receive Thy grace;
Purge me from my sins and failures,
In my heart Thine image trace.

Write Thyself upon me, Jesus,
So that all who see may read—
Read of Thee, and see Thy spirit
In the life I daily lead.

Let my life be an epistle,
Known and read of ev'ry man:
As men read me may they see Thee,
And accept Thy saving plan.

Thus from day to day in living,
I shall magnify Thy name,
And shall be a true ensample
Of the truth my lips proclaim.

—Selected.

Notice

The next issue of THE MEGIDDO MESSAGE will be a combination of two issues. This is being done in connection with our observance of True Christmas and New Year's Day on March 25, and Easter on April 8. By combining the two issues into one number we are enabled to present the truths and other thoughts pertaining to these events more comprehensively. This issue will be dated March 19, 1955. A full-color cover illustration will be used, also colorful throughout. Watch for it! Do not miss it!

OBITUARY

HERMAN ABEL SPRAGUE

Again we are called upon to record the passing of another member of the Megiddo Mission Church, Herman Abel Sprague of Spencerport, N. Y., February 2, 1955.

The deceased was born March 3, 1869, in Lewbeach, N. Y., and married to Glencora Allan on February 16, 1888. He leaves to mourn his loss a son, Abel Sprague of San Antonio, Texas, a daughter, Mrs. Hilda Erickson of Rochester, N. Y., and several grandchildren.

Our brother was a carpenter by trade, but in the latter years of his life became afflicted with arthritis which confined him to a wheel chair. However, being of an energetic and ingenious nature, he devised methods of planting, tending and harvesting a garden, and thereby proved the verity of the axiom, "Where there's a will, there's a way."

But the greatest consolation came from reading and studying God's Word, together with his wife, the late Sister Glencora Sprague who was his constant companion until her decease in May, 1953. That communion brought them peace and comfort in times of distress, and gave them hope beyond this vale of tears and mortality.

Funeral services were conducted by the Rev. P. J. Thatcher.

Some happy day these earthly scenes will end,
And we shall gather friend with friend;
No more to part, no more to weep,
If we God's holy laws now keep.

Meditations on the Word

MEMORY VERSE: Hebrews 10:38, 39, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

That faith is an indispensable element in the life of a Christian is evident from the great number of times its importance is stressed throughout the Scriptures. Anyone familiar with the workings of the world of finance knows what an important place is there filled by the element of faith. That this same principle of confidence should hold good in our relation to the Eternal and the rewards He has offered, is but reasonable. True, we have never looked upon the face of God or heard His voice, yet we have very good reasons to believe such a Being exists. To disbelieve it would be to take the untenable position that the visible universe with its symmetry and smoothness of working, the earth, and the myriads of varied forms of life upon it, all came about by accident. We then should witness the phenomenon of a creation without a Creator, a design without a Designer, direction with no One to direct, and effect without a Cause.

We may refuse to accept the Bible as the Word of God on the grounds that its claim of divine authorship cannot be backed up by other contemporaneous writings, depending solely on the statements of its authors, who—though honest—may have been misled zealots, ascribing natural phenomena to the Divine. But to establish the Authority of the Book it is not even necessary to search back to its beginnings; it proves itself true when taken at face value. The lofty, straightforward character of its teachings at once demonstrates to an open mind that it does not reflect the thought-pattern of the age in which it was produced—for example, compare the Bible with Homer's "Iliad"—and even today it is still far ahead of the times.

When the Old Testament was written, polytheism was the popular belief among the most cultured peoples of the time; yet Moses and the Prophets of Israel, without exception, declared unequivocally there is but one God who made heaven and earth, and created all things.

Even before astronomers were speculating whether or not the sun, moon and stars were merely lights hung in the sky, periodically lighted and extinguished, the Prophets divinely inspired had knowledge of the magnitude of the heavenly constellations, and of the greatness of the Hand that created them.

Quite recently scientists have begun to whisper that possibly the other heavenly bodies are inhabited by intelligent beings similar to the human family, while 1900 years ago the Apostle made it plain that he worshiped a God by whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

At the time the Bible was written it was universally believed the earth was flat—and indeed it has been scarcely a hundred years since this belief had many supporters—yet the words of the Prophet Isaiah have been on record over 2500 years to the effect that the earth is a sphere: "He sits over the round earth, so high" (40: 22, Moffatt).

"Of all the books that mortals wrote
Not one struck true perfection's note,"

yet perfection of character is the lofty theme maintained

all through the Divine writings. God said to Abraham, "Walk before me and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17: 1); and Jesus, in the first century, declared: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5: 48).

The conclusions of self-confident men, educated above the average for their time, have always been accepted as authority in their respective lines, while the Book declares that man at his best estate is only vanity, that his wisdom is foolishness with the Almighty, and that God's thoughts are as much higher than his thoughts as the heavens are higher than the earth. This position alone proves conclusively that the Bible is not of human origin, for man could not be induced to so belittle himself.

Now that we have established a premise in favor of faith in the Bible as the Word of God, let us meditate further on the importance of that faith at such a time as this. In the 1st verse of Hebrews 11 we read, "Now faith is the substance [ground or confidence—margin] of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We have not yet received the reward of immortality or seen anyone who has. Our bodies are still mortal, corruptible; we are subject to disappointment, old age, disease and death. Our only ground for confidence that we can escape these limitations of mortality and live for ever, comes through our faith in the promises of God. But this faith, to be a moving factor in our lives, must be so strong it will admit no doubt; for "the just shall live by his faith." A living, active faith is the thing the just man lives by, hence he cannot possess life or be a spiritually animate being without it.

This living faith promotes action, and continuity of action. To surge ahead for a spell, and then halt, or recede and draw back, will get us nowhere. The words of the Apostle in I Thess. 4: 1 are clear and forceful: "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more." Stagnant water would be unfit to quench one's thirst, likewise a stagnant Christian is of no use to the Eternal; growth and action are indispensable virtues. The only faith that will avail is a faith that worketh by love, a faith buttressed by works of righteousness.

The statement in Heb. 11: 6 that "without faith it is impossible to please Him," is but another way of saying that if any man draw back the Almighty will have no pleasure in him. This warning against drawing back into perdition seems especially fitting for our day. Nearly eighteen centuries have elapsed since God communed audibly with men through the medium of angels, hence the attitude has developed that His voice will never again be heard on this earth. Scoffers have arisen, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (II Pet. 3: 4). "But," continues the Apostle, "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night"; a thief to those who are not looking for Him. Now is the time to hold on to our "confidence which hath great recompense of reward," to believe that He that "shall come will come, and will not tarry," and spend every moment preparing for that auspicious event.

It is a time to keep our faith in lively exercise, our lamps filled with the oil of a firm belief in God's promises and our lights brightly burning, our confidence in His divine promises unshaken, with our watchword for victory the firm determination that we will not be of those who "draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

ITEMS FROM OUR MAIL BAG

We are pleased to learn that our readers are enjoying the articles on the first three chapters of Genesis especially, as well as the other subject matter.

A heart-warming letter is this from a subscriber at Rome, Georgia.

"Dear Sisters and Brothers: I take this time to write you. I have been reading your books and MESSAGE for one year, and I have learned more about God's Word than I have in all my life; and I have been going to church for 40 years.

"I am trying to get myself ready. I find it no easy job; but I am working hard on myself. I am sorry I waited so long to hear the real truth. I have asked you questions I did not understand, and I thank you for helping me.

Yours in love, Mrs. J. R.—"

Another of like import is from a subscriber at South Nelson, N. B., Can.

"Dear Mrs. B—: I am late in answering your letter . . . and later the lovely History Book which I found very interesting. I did enjoy looking at all the pictures, of your printing-room and where you are wrapping the MESSAGE to send out. I'm sure it must be very interesting work.

"As I read the history of Rev. L. T. Nichols I could not help but admire such a strong character; to go so thoroughly into such a study alone is very wonderful. I was also impressed by the history of Rev. Maud Hembree, how she started out to have Rev. Nichols silenced once and for all, and then afterward succumbed to his way of thinking—and being educated as she was in a Roman Catholic convent! That is very unusual.

"I am also reading The Garden of Eden in the MESSAGE and find it most interesting. In fact every article is very good. . . . Very sincerely, Mrs. R— M—."

A sister at Winnipeg, Man., Can., expresses thanks.

"Dear Christian Friends: Greeting in Jesus' Name. I am writing to thank you for your wonderful letters of the month I received. I am always glad to get your inspiring and welcome letters. It is just like receiving a letter from home. I cannot express my feeling for your spiritual advice which you give me, and how I thank you all! I do appreciate the Word of Truth. I know the world is in darkness as to the Truth. It is too serious a thing to waste our time on the things of the world.

"I read your letters over and over again, and I cannot tell you the joy I get. I was just thinking of my trials and temptations when I received that letter from Sister J—and it did me so much good. That letter showed me quite a lot; and I said I was going to keep pressing on in the Light of Truth. Yours sincerely, Mrs. L. M—."

Good news is this from Vermilion, Alberta, Canada.

"Dear Mr. Thatcher: Some time ago we acquired the two volumes of *The Known Bible and Its Defense*. While we have read the Bible a large part of our lives, we found some things hard to understand; so on your recommendation we ordered the above volumes and find that they answer practically all questions that can be asked about the Bible. . . .

"We have looked and hoped for a long time for the return of the Lord Jesus to set the captive free, to relieve the oppressed, and to open the eyes of the spiritually blind that they may see and know that the Father requires of all mankind to live pure and holy lives.

"Jesus is our great way-shower and we must strive daily to exemplify His holy life until we become one with

Him. The signs of the times and present world conditions now indicate that the times of the Gentiles has about run out. . . . A great change now seems in the offing, and so let us join with all of like mind by saying, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' Best wishes, C— Y—."

From a brother at Selma, Iowa, is a sincere letter.

"Dear Brother in Truth: We do need to have our attention called often to the fact that the day of the Lord is close at hand. It will be worth something to be able to escape that oncoming storm. Let us sell out now, while we have time and opportunity, and buy the Pearl of Great Price. We hear Paul speaking to the brethren at Rome, and more to us: 'It is high time to waken up; for Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. It is far on in the night, the day is almost here.' There are many signboards which have proven we are in the last days—perilous times, lovers of pleasures, immorality and vice. Let us keep our eye on the prize, that we might be accounted worthy to escape that coming storm.

Yours in the One Truth, G— M—."

Such letters as the following one from Johnson City, N. Y., cheer the heart of our missionaries.

"The Megiddo Mission: In the early winter a lady from the Mission called on the people of this street, and I have read everything she so kindly left me. I want to say: Your booklets are the best, most interesting, and true to the Bible I have had in a long time.

"I want your complete set, and I want to send the Mission a few addresses of relatives and persons I want to give the chance to read your wonderful explanations. I hope they will be greatly enlightened and inspired to try to be more spiritual in the future. I feel the Lord is with you in your grand work. Very truly, L— V. D—."

And this is from far away Lagos, Nigeria, W. Africa.

"Sir: I feel I should write and thank you once again for the great aid obtained since I came in touch with you.

"Since I became a daily reader of your paper, I have seen and known fully what Scriptural understanding is. Before the advent of your God-sent paper, I had been in darkness biblically. But now that your paper is showing the light to me and the rest of my friends, I say more power to your gospel message.

"In passing, I wish to mention to you that I am still ignorant of how your Church came to be founded, the Founder, the President, or anything pertaining to its full history. I wish I could get the story thoroughly through a life history of the Megiddo Mission.

"I wish also that you enroll me as a member of your Church. Thanking you for more despatches, and waiting to hear from you, I am, Yours in Christ, J. A. N. A—."

The following, from Jacksonville, Fla., is a specimen of the sort of inquiries which crowd our daily mail bag.

"Dear Sirs: Please send me the booklet concerning *Elijah the Prophet Coming before Christ*, as mentioned in the advertising section of *Grit*.

"This is a prophecy which perplexes many people, including myself, and I feel you are doing a great Christian work in revealing its meaning. Yours, C— W. P—."

AN APPEAL FROM THE EDITOR: Subscribers, have you made available to all your friends this valuable little book which gives Bible evidence for the world's next great event? Don't delay to render this missionary service. It is well to take to heart the familiar hymn lines,

"Somebody told the glad story to you,
Won't you tell somebody too?"

NEVER LOOK BACK

There Sodom and Gomorrah stood,
Two wicked cities of the plain
Whose dwellers, rather than do good,
So often took God's name in vain.
They loved the pleasures of the day,
The fleeting joys that license brought;
They ate and drank, and rose to play—
But God was not in all their thoughts.

For many years God's mercy flowed,
But they continued deep in sin,
And failed to show their gratitude
By striving to be clean within,
Till God said they should flaunt no more
Their wickedness, or be employed
In seeking pleasures by the score;
For they were doomed to be destroyed.

But there was one, a righteous Lot,
Whose soul was vexed from day to day
By what he witnessed: he would not
Take part with them in any way.
To him two angels came one night,
And, warning of disaster near,
Said, "To yon mountain take your flight,
With every one whom you hold dear."

Then Lot went to his sons-in-law,
And warned them that they, too, should flee;
But with a saddened heart he saw
They would not listen to his plea.
He seemed to them as one who mocked,
So calloused were their hearts, and seared;
And so they shrugged his kind words off,
And reveled while disaster neared.

At dawn the angels gave command
To Lot, his wife and daughters, too.
And, taking each one by the hand,
They bade that wicked place "adieu."
Saved by a just and righteous God,
They pressed ahead, until Lot's wife,
With heartstrings where her kin abode,
Looked back, and thereby lost her life.

The record of events long past,
And kept for our instruction now,
Will aid us, if we will hold fast
The angel's hand, and not allow
Ungodly ones to interfere
Until we make a crooked track;
For once again destruction's near,
And we must never once look back.

—L. L. S.

V
4
2

1
6
5
5

XU